

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 09125

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SUBJECT: A CENTER-ORIENTED LABOR MOVEMENT: UNIFICATION
OF INDEPENDENTS IN THE MAKING?

REFS: 1. MADRID 8319, 2. MADRID 6750, 3. MADRID 5835

1. WHILE MOST TRADE UNION LEADERS -- LIKE OTHER SPANIARDS -- ARE VACATIONING DURING THE MONTH OF AUGUST, SOME OF THE INDEPENDENT LABOR ELEMENTS ARE APPARENTLY TRYING TO GET A UNIFICATION MOVEMENT ROLLING. A RECENT TERSE ACCOUNT IN CONSERVATIVE ABC ANNOUNCED THE FIRST MEETING OF THE "COORDINADORA" OF INDEPENDENT UNIONS WITH A VIEW TO PROMOTING A "NATIONAL CONFEDERATION" OF SUCH UNIONS (SEE REFTEL C FOR LISTING OF THESE SPLINTER INDEPENDENT UNIONS). ON AUGUST 4, ONE JOSE MARIA NIETO JIMENEZ (WHO IDENTIFIED HIMSELF AS THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF SAO - SINDICATO DE ACCION OBRERA, ANOTHER NEWLY-CONCEIVED NON-MARXIST, CENTER-ORIENTED SPLINTER UNION) CALLED ON LABATT TO DISCUSS THE INDEPENDENTS' UNIFICATION EFFORTS. HIGHLIGHTS OF HIS REMARKS ARE REPORTED BELOW.

2. DURING A JULY 27 MEETING OF THE "COORDINADORA
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DE INDEPENDIENTES" ATTENDED BY REPRESENTATIVES OF 19 INDEPENDENT LABOR GROUPS, 6 WERE CHOSEN TO FORM AN EXECUTIVE WORKING GROUP (EJECUTIVO) WHICH WAS TASKED TO DRAFT A SET OF PRINCIPLES AND COME UP WITH A UNIFICATION PROPOSAL. THE FIRST SESSION TOOK PLACE AUGUST 3-4; A SECOND IS SCHEDULED AUGUST 19. THE 6 GROUPS REPRESENTED ON THE EJECUTIVO WERE SAO (ACTING

AS MODERATOR, SAID NIETO), CDT, CGT, CESI, SITA (AIR TRANSPORT), AND CAJAS DE AHORRO (SAVINGS BANKS). WHEN ASKED WHETHER THE CTI (WHICH TOGETHER WITH CDT IS CURRENTLY ONE OF THE TWO PRINCIPAL INDEPENDENT SPLINTER UNIONS) FORMED PART OF THE OVERALL 34-MAN COORDINADORA, NIETO SAID "THEY ARE HALF IN AND HALF OUT". AS TO USO, "THEY ARE NOT INVOLVED IN THE UNIFICATION MOVE", ALTHOUGH NIETO WAS AWARE THAT CERTAIN ELEMENTS IN THE COORDINADORA FAVORED THE INTERVENTION OF USO AS A RALLYING POINT FOR THE INDEPENDENTS (SITBKVNWPIKKPENDENT LABOR ORGANIZATION WOULD INSIST UPON ITS INDEPENDENCE -- AND THAT MEANT INDEPENDENCE FROM POLITICAL PARTIES, MANAGEMENT, THE CHURCH, AND GOVERNMENT. IT WOULD CERTAINLY BE NON-MARXIST, "IF NOT ANTI-MARXIST", AND IT WAS THEIR AIM TO BE "MORE SOCIAL THAN THE SOCIALISTS" (SIC). LABATT ASKED WHETHER HE HAD HAD ANY CONTACT WITH UCD LEADER ARTURO MOYA, THE PROMOTER OF A CENTER-ORIENTED ("NON-MARXIST ALTERNATIVE") TRADE UNION (REFTEL B). NIETO REPLIED IN THE AFFIRMATIVE, BUT EXPRESSED THE PERSONAL OPINION THAT THE DANGER OF FOLLOWING SUCH A ROUTE WAS THAT THE INDEPENDENTS WOULD BE BOUND TO DANCE TO THE TUNE OF THE GOVERNMENT PARTY. THE SAO SPOKESMAN HOPED THAT A UNITY CONGRESS OF INDEPENDENTS COULD BE HELD IN NOVEMBER 1978.

4. NIETO ADMITTED THAT THEIR ECONOMIC PROBLEMS WERE CONFIDENTIAL

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GREAT AND THAT "WE NEED FINANCIAL HELP". THERE COULD NOT BE ANY "THIRD TRADE UNION OPTION" UNLESS FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE WERE FORTHCOMING, AND HE WONDERED WHETHER AMERICAN TRADE UNIONS MIGHT BE INTERESTED IN HELPING. LABATT HELD OUT LITTLE CHANCE IN THAT REGARD, BUT AT SPECIFIC REQUEST OF NIETO FOR AN AFL-CIO CONTACT, GAVE HIM NAME AND ADDRESS OF AFL-CIO REPRESENTATIVE IN PARIS.

5. COMMENT. EMBASSY HAS NOT AS YET BEEN ABLE TO ESTABLISH NIETO'S BONA FIDES WITH RESPECT TO CLAIM THAT HE ACTING AS MODERATOR FOR UNIFICATION EFFORTS OF INDEPENDENTS. IT IS OF INTEREST TO NOTE THAT AFTER HIS ELECTION AS THIRD VICE PRESIDENT OF CESI IN APRIL 1978, LEFT CENTER CAMBIO 16 IDENTIFIED HIM AS A FUERZA NUEVA (FAR RIGHT) MAN -- FOLLOWING WHICH HE WAS "SUSPENDED" FROM THE CESI NATIONAL COUNCIL. AS A MATTER OF FACT, DURING THE CONVERSATION WITH LABATT, NIETO VOLUNTEERED THAT HE HAD BEEN ACCUSED OF BEING WITH FUERZA NUEVA, AND DENIED ANY SUCH RELATIONSHIP. WHATEVER THE NATURE OR STATUS OF CURRENT UNIFICATION EFFORTS OF THE INDEPENDENTS, IT DOES APPEAR THAT THE

POT IS BUBBLING. THE UCD FAVORS THE ORGANIZATION OF
A THIRD MAINSTREAM LABOR ORGANIZATION (MADRID 8590),
BUT WHETHER THESE FLEDGELING EFFORTS WILL BEAR FRUIT
REMAINS TO BE SEEN. TODMAN

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